

Message Text

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SECDEF WASHDC

INFO USMISSION NATO

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

USNMR SHAPE

USCINCEUR

UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 2 MBFR VIENNA 0198

FROM US REP MBFR

E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: PARM, NATO

SUBJECT: MBFR NEGOTIATIONS: DE VOS APRIL 8 PRESS

CONFERENCE QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

SUMMARY: IN THEQ AND A SESSION FOLLOWING THE
WESTERN PRESS STATEMENT, AMBASSADOR DE VOS HAD TO DEAL
WITH QUESTIONS WHICH PROBED WHETHER THE WEST SAW ANYTHING
USEFUL IN THE EASTERN FEBRUARY 19 PROPOSALS, AND WHETHER
THE ALLIES COULD MAKE ANY POSITIVE EVALUATION OF THE
TALKS. QUESTIONS FROM EASTERN MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES
AIMED AT ELICITING RESPONSES ON WHAT THE WEST COULD
OFFER IN RETURN FOR ITS DEMAND FOR THE REDUCTION OF A
TANK ARMY, AND WHETHER AIRPLANES ARE NOT JUST AS
DANGEROUS AS TANKS AND SHOULD THEREFORE ALSO BE REDUCED.
END SUMMARY

1. Q.(IZVESTIYA) THERE HAS BEEN A LONG-TIME UNDERSTANDING THAT
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THERE IS A CERTAIN STABILITY IN EUROPE, THAT IS IN THE

FORCES THAT ARE BASED THERE. DO YOU AGREE THAT THIS EQUILIBRIUM DOES EXIST?

A. IT HAS BEEN THE CENTRAL ELEMENT OF OUR POSITION FROM THE OUT-SET THAT THESE NEGOTIATIONS HAVE TO DEAL WITH A SECTOR WHERE THERE IS CLEARLY AN UNSTABLE SITUATION, WHERE THERE IS AN IMBALANCE, AN UNEQUAL SITUATION IN PARTICULAR IN RELATIONSHIP TO THE GROUND FORCES, THAT IS GROUND FORCE MANPOWER AND TANKS. THIS, WE THINK IS THE KEY FACTOR IN THE SECURITY SITUATION IN CENTRAL EUROPE AT THIS MOMENT, AND WE THINK THAT THE NEGOTIATIONS SHOULD AIM AT REDUCING FORCES IN SUCH A WAY THAT THERE IS ENHANCED STABILITY, AND THEY SHOULD DEAL IN A CONSTRUCTIVE WAY WITH THAT ISSUE. (FOLLOW-UP Q. WHEN YOU SPEAK ABOUT TANKS, AND WHEN YOU DO NOT SPEAK ABOUT AIRCRAFT, TECHNICALLY, DON'T YOU THINK THAT A PLANE IS MORE DANGEROUS THAN A TANK? DO YOU THINK THAT A TANK IS LESS VULNERABLE TO ATTACK FROM THE AIR? DON'T YOU THINK THAT BOTH TANKS AND AIRCRAFT SHOULD BE REDUCED? THAT WOULD BE A MORE JUST APPROACH TO THE PROBLEM.) ONE ANSWER TO THIS WOULD BE THAT IN AIRCRAFT THE EASTERN SIDE HAS A CONSIDERABLE SUPERIORITY, AS YOU PROBABLY KNOW FROM IISS STUDIES WHICH HAVE PUBLISHED FIGURES TO SHOW THAT. FURTHERMORE, THE AIRFORCE PICTURE IS SOMEWHAT MORE COMPLICATED, AND IT IS MORE DIFFICULT TO LOOK AT THAT AREA IN ISOLATION. AIRCRAFT HAVE LONG-RANGE CAPABILITIES, THEY ARE VERY MOBILE, THEY CAN EASILY BE MOVED IN AND OUT OF THE AREA, THEY CAN EASILY STRIKE AT TARGETS IN THE AREA FROM AREAS WHICH ARE ADJACENT TO IT. AS A WEST EUROPEAN I LOOK AT THE WESTERN DISTRICTS OF THE UNION, AND THERE ARE LARGE NUMBERS OF SOVIET AIRCRAFT STATIONED THERE. THAT ONLY ILLUSTRATES HOW COMPLICATED THE PICTURE WOULD BE IF YOU LOOK AT AIRFORCES IN ORDER TO INCLUDE THEM INTO THESE REDUCTION NEGOTIATIONS. AND THAT IS WHY WE FEEL STILL THAT WE SHOULD CONCENTRATE ON THE ONE AREA WHICH IS PRACTICAL TO DEAL WITH, AS YOU LOOK AT THE SITUATION IN THE REDUCTION AREA. THEN YOU SEE THAT THERE IS A LARGE INSTABILITY IN GROUND FORCES. THAT IS NOT THE ONLY IMBALANCE, BUT WE WANT TO CONCENTRATE ON THE ONE WHICH CAN BE DEALT WITH MOST EFFICIENTLY IN THE CONTEXT OF THESE NEGOTIATIONS.

2. Q. (AUSTRIAN TV) MR. AMBASSADOR, I THINK TODAY THE IISS IN LONDON HAS COME OUT WITH NEW FIGURES SUGGESTING THAT THE SOVIET UNION HAS INCREASED ITS MILITARY POTENTIAL IN THIS YEAR. WHAT CONCLUSIONS WITH RESPECT TO THE TALKS IN VIENNA CAN BE DRAWN FROM THIS FACT?

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A. FORCE IMPROVEMENTS HAVE INDEED BEEN GOING ON ON THE WARSAW PACT SIDE. THEY ARE CONTINUING, AND THAT IS ONE REASON WHY WE CANNOT ACCEPT THE EASTERN APPROACH IN THESE NEGOTIATIONS OF EQUAL PERCENTAGE REDUCTIONS. THIS WOULD CODIFY AN EASTERN SUPERIORITY IN GROUND FORCES,

WHICH HAS COME ABOUT IN RECENT YEARS.

3. Q. (PRESSE) IN COMPARING BOTH STATEMENTS MADE HERE TODAY I HAVE DIFFICULTIES IN FINDING ANY POSITIVE ASPECT IN YOURS, ALTHOUGH THE EASTERN SIDE SAID THAT THERE WERE AT LEAST SOME POLITIVE ELEMENTS IN YOU DECEMBER 16 PROPOSAL. THE EASTERN STATEMENT MENTIONS THE DEFINITION DISCUSSION, AND YOU DON'T MENTION THAT AT ALL. WOULD YOU AGREE THEREFORE THAT THIS DISCUSSION WAS OF NO INTEREST TO THE WESTERN

SIDE, OR THAT THE WESTERN SIDE EXPECTS NOTHING POSITIVE IN THE NEXT
A. AS TO THE POSITIVE RESULTS IN GENERAL, WE REGRET AND WE HAVE BEEN A LITTLE DISAPPOINTED BY THE NEGATIVE WELCOME OUR PROPOSALS OF DECEMBER 16, 1975, HAVE RECEIVED FROM THE EASTERN SIDE. WE THINK THAT THIS VERY POSITIVE AND IMPORTANT SUPPLEMENT TO THE WESTERN REDUCTION PROPOSALS WOULD HAVE MERITED A MORE POSITIVE REPLY. IF AMBASSADOR LOHODA'S STATEMENT INDICATES THAT THEY WILL BE MOVING TOWARDS SUCH A MORE POSITIVE ATTITUDE IN THE NEXT ROUND, THAT WOULD OF COURSE BE A WELCOME DEVELOPMENT. AS CONCERNS THE DEFINITIONS DISCUSSION, IT IS NO DOUBT A USEFUL DISCUSSION. IT IS A SUBJECT THAT HAS TO BE ADDRESSED, FOR IN ANY AGREEMENT YOU WILL HAVE TO HAVE SECTION DEALING WITH DEFINITIONS. THE DISCUSSION SO FAR HAS HOWEVER NOT CONTRIBUTED TO THE SOLUTION OF MAJOR ISSUES WHICH ARE DIVIDING US. IT HAS ON THE OTHER HAND UNDERLINED THE PRESSING NEED FOR THE EXCHANGE OF DATA, AN INITIATIVE TAKEN BY THE WEST MORE THAN TWO YEARS AGO TO DISCUSS DEFINITIONS. WE PROPOSED TO DISCUSS DEFINITIONS. WE PROPOSED TO DISCUSS DEFINITIONS IN CONNECTION WITH DATA, BECAUSE WE FELT IT WOULD NOT BE SO PRODUCTIVE TO DICUSS DEFINITIONS IN ABSTRACTO. THIS SUBJECT HAS TO BE DISCUSSED IN CONNECTION WITH DATA TO WHICH DEFINITIONS HAVE TO APPLY. WE FEEL-AND WE ARE ALSO CONVINCED THAT IN THE AREA OF DEFINITIONS IT IS DIFFICULT TO MOVE TOWARDS AGREEMENT WITHOUT AN EXCHANGE OF DATA. (FOLLOW-UP Q. WELL, HOW DO YOU MANAGE TO SPEAK TO EACH
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OTHER FOR TWO AND ONE HALF YEARS WITHOUT HAVING THE SAME TERMINOLOGY? THAT IS ONE OF THE PROBLEMS IN THESE NEGOTIATIONS, THAT WE DO NOT HAVE THE SAME TERMINOLOGY IN MANY RESPECTS YET.

4. (REUTERS) I NOTICE THAT IN YOUR LAST PARAGRAPH YOU LOOK FORWARD IN THE COMING 9TH ROUND TO A DISCUSSION OF THE AUGMENTED WESTERN REDUCTION PROPOSALS. WOULD IT BE FAIR TO CONCLUDE FROM THIS THAT YOU SEE

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FROM US REP MBFR

NO ELEMENTS OF THE RECENT SOVIET BLOC PROPOSAL WHICH MERIT FURTHER
CONSIDERATION?

A. THE DIFFICULTY WE HAVE WITH THE SOVIET BLOC PROPOSAL IS THAT WE
CANNOT SEE ANYTHING SUBSTANTIALLY NEW IN IT. IT BASICALLY CONTAINS
ALL ELEMENTS OF THE ORIGINAL PROPOSAL MADE IN 1973, AT THE OUT-
SET OF THESE NEGOTIATIONS, AND A I THINK THE LANGUAGE OF MY STATEMENT
INDICATES, WE CONSIDER IT JUST ANOTHER VARIANT OF THEIR FIRST
PROPOSAL.

IT DOES NOT ADDRESS WHAT WE CONSIDER TO BE THE CENTRAL ISSUE IN
THESE NEGOTIATIONS, THAT IS THE DISPARITIES IN GROUND FORCE MANPOWER
AND TANKS. ITS PROPOSAL FOR EQUAL PERCENTAGE REDUCTIONS WOULD AMOUNT
TO THE CONTRACTUALIZATION OF A LARGE EASTERN SUPERIORITY AND TO THE
REQUIREMENT FOR THE WEST TO RECOGNIZE SUCH A SUPERIORITY IN AN INTER-
NATIONAL AGREEMENT. IT WOULD FREEZE THAT EASTERN SUPERIORITY. IT
ADDRESSES THE FORCE RELATIONSHIP ON THE BASIS OF NATIONAL CEILINGS,
AND I THINK YOU ARE FAMILIAR WITH OUR POSITION ON THAT. WE COULD NOT
ACCEPT SUCH A RESTRICTION ON THE INTEGRATED NATO DEFENSE COOPERATION

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OR ON THE POSSIBLE FUTURE EUROPEAN DEFENSE ORGANIZATION. AS REGARDS PHASING, THIS IS NOT A MOVE TOWARDS OUR POSITION BECAUSE IT STILL REQUIRES ALL PARTICIPANTS TO ASSUME COMMITMENTS, PRECISE COMMITMENTS, AS TO THE AMOUNT AND TIMING OF THEIR REDUCTION IN A FIRST-PHASE AGREE

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MENT. IT DOES NOT TAKE ACCOUNT OF THE WESTERN POSITION ON THIS ASPECT, AND I EXPLAINED THE WESTERN POSITION IN MY STATEMENT. YOU ARE FAMILIAR WITH THE WESTERN PHASING CONCEPT, WHICH IS BASED ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT THE TWO NUCLEAR SUPER POWERS WOULD HAVE TO MAKE A FIRST SIGNIFICANT MOVEMENT TO AN OUTCOME OF PARITY, WHICH WOULD ALSO BE ESTABLISHED IN A FIRST-PHASE AGREEMENT AS A COLLECTIVE COMMON CEILING, TO CREATE THE CONFIDENCE NEEDED FOR OTHER DIRECT PARTICIPANTS SO THAT THEY CAN MAKE THEIR DECISIONS AS TO THE AMOUNT AND TIMING OF THEIR REDUCTIONS.

5. Q. (BBC) YOU SEEMED TO HAVE AGREED ON A RATHER LONG RECESS. IS THE RE A SPECIAL REASON FOR THAT? DOES IT MEAN FOR INSTANCE THAT THERE MUST BE SOME FUNDAMENTAL RETHINKING BEFORE YOU CAN MOVE FORWARD, AND DID THE REQUEST FOR THE LONG RECESS COME FROM THE WEST OR FROM THE EAST?

A. IT IS ALWAYS A DIFFICULT PROBLEM OF COORDINATING WESTERN AND EASTERN SCHEDULES ON THESE MATTERS. IT SO HAPPENS THAT THIS TIME IT IS A BIT LONGER THAN USUSL. WE WOULD CERTAINLY HOPE THAT THE EASTERN SIDE WILL MAKE GOOD USE OF IT TO STUDY OUR PROPOSALS, AND WE HOPE THAT THEIR STUDY WILL RESULT IN A MORE POSITIVE ATTITUDE AND REACTION IN THE NEXT ROUND.

6. Q.(PRESSE) WOULD YOU CONSIDER THE REDUCTION OF A SOVIET TANK ARMY IN EUROPE AN ESSENTIAL STEP?

A. O COURSE THIS WOULD BE A SIGNIFICANT STEP, AND THAT IS ALSO OUR PROPOSAL. (FOLLOW-UP Q. NOW IF THE SOVIET UNION REDUCED ONLY ONE DIVISION, WHAT WOULD YOU CALL THAT?) A GOOD MOVEMENT TOWARDS A SIGNIFICANT STEP. (FOLLOW-UP Q. SO THAT THE PROPOSAL TO REDUCE ONE REGIMENT IS A GOOD STEP ON THAT WAY AS WELL?) IF IT IS DONE AS A FIRST STEP TOWARDS THE REDUCTION OF A TANK ARMY, THAT WOULD BE A MOVEMENT TOWARDS THE PARITY CONCEPT WE HAVE PROPOSED. I WOULD THINK IT WOULD BE ENCOURAGING.

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7. Q. (IZVESTIYA) WHAT WOULD YOU RECIPROCATATE WITH FOR THE TANK ARMY WITHDRAWAL BY THE WARSAW PACT? WHAT WILL YOUR SIDE DO?

A. IN OUR PROPOSAL WE SPEAK ABOUT A PERCENTAGE-WISE EQUAL REDUCTION OF U.S. FORCES FOR THE FIRST PHASE. THIS WOULD BE A FIRST STEP TOWARDS A SECOND PHASE IN WHICH WE WOULD IMPLEMENT THE PARITY CONCEPT THROUGH

THE ATTAINMENT OF A COMMON CEILING, A COLLECTIVE COMMON CEILING, ON GROUND FORCE MANPOWER.

8. Q (CBS) DO YOU THINK THAT A LACK OF ANY PROGRESS IN THE SALT TALKS BETWEEN THE SOVIET UNION AND THE U.S. WOULD HAVE ANY EFFECT ON THESE TALKS?

A. THEY ARE DIFFERENT NEGOTIATIONS AS REGARDS PARTICIPATION AND SUBJECT MATTER. THEY ARE BOTH QUITE COMPLICATED. WE SEE NO REASON TO APPLY ANY ORGANIC LINK BETWEEN THE TWO, ALTHOUGH THEY BOTH DEAL WITH THE GENERAL SUBJECT OF ATTEMPTING TO REDUCE THE DANGERS OF ARMED CONFLICT, ESPECIALLY THE DANGERS OF NUCLEAR CONFLICT. IN THAT RESPECT, PROGRESS IN ONE WOULD HAVE A PSYCHOLOGICALLY BENEFICIAL INFLUENCE ON THE OTHER. BUT WE SEE NO REASON TO MAKE ONE DEPENDENT ON THE OTHER. IT CERTAINLY IS NOT OUR POLICY, AND AS FAR AS I CAN GATHER IT IS NOT THE OFFICIAL POSITION OF THE EASTERN SIDE EITHER. BUT I CAN ASSURE YOU THAT SALT IS NOT HOLDING BACK OUR NEGOTIATIONS HERE. END TEXT
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